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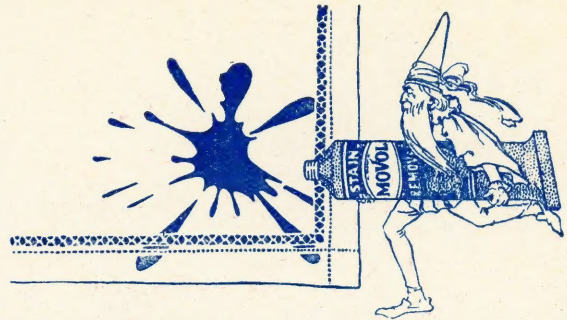
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A ZEPPELIN RAIDER

1915—1916

confident type than the German. It called itself "nationalism" rather than imperialism, and it set itself, by appeals to patriotic pride, to thwart the efforts of those socialists and rationalists who sought to get into touch with liberal elements in German life. It brooded upon the *Revanche*, the return match with Prussia. But in spite of that preoccupation, it set itself to the adventure of annexation and exploitation in the Far East and in Africa, narrowly escaping a war with Britain upon the Fashoda clash (1898), and it never relinquished a dream of acquisitions in Syria.¹ Italy too caught the imperialist fever; the blood-letting of Adowa cooled her for a time, and then she resumed in 1911 with a war upon Turkey and the annexation of Tripoli.² The Italian imperialists exhorted their countrymen to forget Mazzini and remember Julius Cæsar; for were they not the heirs of the Roman Empire? Imperialism touched the Balkans; little countries not a hundred years from slavery began to betray exalted intentions; King Ferdinand of Bulgaria assumed the title of Tsar, the latest of the pseudo-Cæsars, and in the shop-windows of Athens the curious student could study maps showing the dream of a vast Greek empire in Europe and Asia.

In 1913 the three states of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece fell upon Turkey, already weakened by her war with Italy, and swept her out of all her European possessions except the country between Adrianople and Constantinople; later in that year they quarrelled among themselves over the division of the spoils. Rumania joined in the game and helped to crush Bulgaria. Turkey recovered Adrianople. The greater imperialisms of Austria, Russia, and Italy watched that conflict and one another. . . .

¹ Wilfred Scawen Blunt regards the English remaining in Egypt, when they had pledged themselves to go, as the greatest cause of the troubles that culminated in 1914. To pacify the French over Egypt, England connived at the French occupation of Morocco, which Germany had looked upon as her share of North Africa. Hence Germany's bristling attitude to France,

§ 5

While all the world to the west of her was changing rapidly, Russia throughout the nineteenth century changed very slowly indeed. At the end of the nineteenth century, as at its beginning, she was still a Grand Monarchy of the later seventeenth-century type standing on a basis of barbarism, she was still at a stage where court intrigues and imperial favourites could control her international relations. She had



driven a great railway across Siberia to find the disasters of the Japanese war at the end of it; she was using modern methods and modern

and the *revival* in France of the *revanche* idea, which had died down. See Blunt's *My Diaries*, vol. i, September 30th, 1891.

A. C. W.

² It should not be forgotten that Italian action against Turkey was precipitated by the granting of a charter by the Sultan to an Austro-German company or syndicate for the "taking over" of the Tripolitaine: a process which could only have ended by the hoisting of the Imperial German flag on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, opposite Italy. Also, that through Morocco the Germans were attempting to undermine the French position in Algeria and Tunis by supplying

weapons so far as her undeveloped industrialism and her small supply of sufficiently educated people permitted; such writers as Dostoievski had devised a sort of mystical imperialism based on the idea of Holy Russia and her mission, coloured by racial illusions and anti-Semitic passion; but, as events were to show, this had not sunken very deeply into the imagination of the Russian masses. A vague, very simple Christianity pervaded the illiterate peasant life, mixed with much superstition. It was like the pre-reformation peasant life of France or Germany. The Russian moujik was supposed to worship and revere his Tsar and to love to serve a gentleman; in 1913 reactionary English writers were still praising his simple and unquestioning loyalty. But, as in the case of the Western European peasant of the days of the peasant revolts, this reverence for the monarchy was mixed up with the idea that the monarch and the nobleman had to be good and beneficial, and this simple loyalty could, under sufficient provocation, be turned into the same pitiless intolerance of social injustice that burnt the châteaux in the Jacquerie (see Chapter XXXV, § 3) and set up the theocracy in Münster (Chapter XXXV, § 3). Once the commons were moved to anger, there were no links of understanding in a generally diffused education in Russia to mitigate the fury of the outbreak. The upper classes were as much beyond the sympathy of the lower as a different species of animal. These Russian masses were three centuries away from such nationalist imperialism as Germany displayed.

And in another respect Russia differed from modern Western Europe and paralleled its mediæval phase, and that was in the fact that her universities were the resort of many very poor students quite out of touch and out of

the Moroccans with arms and money, and inducing them to attack French rule separately in Western Algeria, and even by way of Saharan oases in Southern Tunis. The writer of this note has actually witnessed this process going on between 1898 and 1911. He asserts that, whether from right or wrong motives, Germany forced France to tackle the thorny problem of Morocco. Either she had to do so or prepare for the evacuation of Algeria. France may have made a few mistakes, but she has conferred enormous benefits on North Africa. Under her control the indigenous population has increased remarkably.

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sympathy with the bureaucratic autocracy. Before 1917 the significance of the proximity of these two factors of revolution, the fuel of discontent and the match of free ideas, was not recognized in European thought, and few people realized that in Russia more than in any other country lay the possibilities of a fundamental revolution.¹

§ 6

When we turn from these European Great Powers, with their inheritance of foreign offices and national policies, to the United States of America, which broke away completely from the Great Idea.

The United States and the Imperial Power System in 1776, we find a most interesting contrast in the operation of the forces which produced the expansive imperialism of Europe. For America as for Europe the mechanical revolution had brought all the world within the range of a few days' journey. The United States, like the Great Powers, had world-wide financial and mercantile interests; a great industrialism had grown up and was in need of overseas markets; the same crises of belief that had shaken the moral solidarity of Europe had occurred in the American world. Her people were as patriotic and spirited as any. Why then did not the United States develop armaments and an aggressive policy? Why were not the stars and stripes waving over Mexico, and why was there not a new Indian system growing up in China under that flag? It was the American who had opened up Japan. After doing so, he had let that Power Europeanize itself and become formidable without a protest. That alone was enough to make Machiavelli, the father of modern foreign policy, turn in his grave. If a Europeanized Great Power had been in the place of the United States, Great Britain would have had to fortify the Canadian frontier from end to end—it is now absolutely unarmed—and to maintain a great arsenal in the St. Lawrence. All the

¹ The general reader who wants some picture in his mind of the recent state of Russia should read Ernest Poole's *The Village*. Pre-revolutionary Russia is admirably sketched in Maurice Baring's *Mainsprings of Russia*, *The Russian People*, and *A Year in Russia*. A small, very illuminating book on the Russian revolution is M. H. Barber's *A British Nurse in Bolshevik Russia*.

divided states of Central and South America would long since have been subjugated and placed under the disciplinary control of United States officials of the "governing class." There would have been a perpetual campaign to Americanize Australia and New Zealand, and yet another claimant for a share in tropical Africa.

And by an odd accident America had produced in President Roosevelt (President 1901-1908) a man of an energy as restless as the German Kaiser's, as eager for large achievements, as florid and eloquent, an adventurous man with a turn for world politics and an instinct for armaments, the very man, we might imagine, to have involved his country in the scramble for overseas possession.

There does not appear to be any other explanation of this general restraint and abstinence on the part of the United States except in their fundamentally different institutions and traditions. In the first place the United States Government has no foreign office and no diplomatic corps of the European type, no body of "experts" to maintain the tradition of an aggressive policy. The president has great powers, but they are subject to the control of the senate, which again is responsible to the state legislatures and the people. The foreign relations of the country are thus under open and public control. Secret treaties are impossible under such a system, and foreign Powers complain of the difficulty and uncertainty of "understandings" with the United States, a very excellent state of affairs. The United States are constitutionally incapacitated, therefore, from the kind of foreign policy that has kept Europe for so long constantly on the verge of war.

And, secondly, there has hitherto existed in the States no organization for and no tradition

of what one may call non-assimilable possessions. Where there is no crown there cannot be crown colonies. In spreading across the American continent, the United States had developed a quite distinctive method of dealing with new territories, admirably adapted for unsettled lands, but very inconvenient if applied too freely to areas already containing an alien population. This method was based on the idea that there cannot be in the United States system a permanently subject people. The



Photo: Brown Bros., New York.

42ND STREET WEST, NEW YORK.

first stage of the ordinary process of assimilation had been the creation of a "territory" under the federal government, having a considerable measure of self-government, sending a delegate (who could not vote) to congress, and destined, in the natural course of things, as the country became settled and population increased, to flower at last into full statehood. This had been the process of development of all the latter states of the Union; the latest territories to become states being Arizona and New Mexico in 1910. The frozen wilderness of Alaska,

bought from Russia, remained politically undeveloped simply because it had an insufficient population for state organization. As the annexations of Germany and Great Britain in the Pacific threatened to deprive the United States navy of coaling stations in that ocean, a part of the Samoan Islands (1889) and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) were annexed (1898). Here for the first time the United States had real subject populations to deal with. But in the absence of any class comparable to the Anglo-Indian officials who sway British opinion, the American procedure followed the territorial method. Every effort was made to bring the educational standards of Hawaii up to the American level, and a domestic legislature on the territorial pattern was organized so that these dusky islanders seem destined ultimately to obtain full United States citizenship. (The small Samoan Islands are taken care of by a United States naval administrator.)

In 1895 occurred a quarrel between the United States and Britain upon the subject of Venezuela, and the Monroe doctrine was upheld stoutly by President Cleveland. Then Mr. Olney made this remarkable declaration: "Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." This, together with the various Pan-American congresses that have been held, point to a real open "foreign policy" of alliance and mutual help throughout America. Treaties of arbitration hold good over all that continent, and the future seems to point to a gradual development of inter-state organization, a Pax Americana, of the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking

peoples, the former in the rôle of elder brother. Here is something we cannot even call an empire, something going far beyond the great alliance of the British Empire in the open equality of its constituent parts.

Consistently with this idea of a common American welfare, the United States in 1898 intervened in the affairs of Cuba, which had been in a state of chronic insurrection against Spain for many years. A brief war ended in the acquisition of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands. Cuba is now an independent self-governing republic. Porto Rico and the Philippines have, however, a special sort of government, with a popularly elected lower house and an upper body containing members appointed by the United States senate. It is improbable that either Porto Rico or the Philippines will become states in the Union. They are much more likely to become free states in some comprehensive alliance with both English-speaking and Latin America.

Both Cuba and Porto Rico welcomed the American intervention in their affairs, but in the Philippine Islands there was a demand for complete and immediate freedom after the Spanish war, and a considerable resistance to the American military administration. There it was that the United States came nearest to imperialism of the Great Power type, and that her record is most questionable. There was much sympathy with the insurgents in the States. Here is the point of view of ex-President Roosevelt as he wrote it in his *Autobiography* (1913):

"As regards the Philippines, my belief was that we should train them for self-government

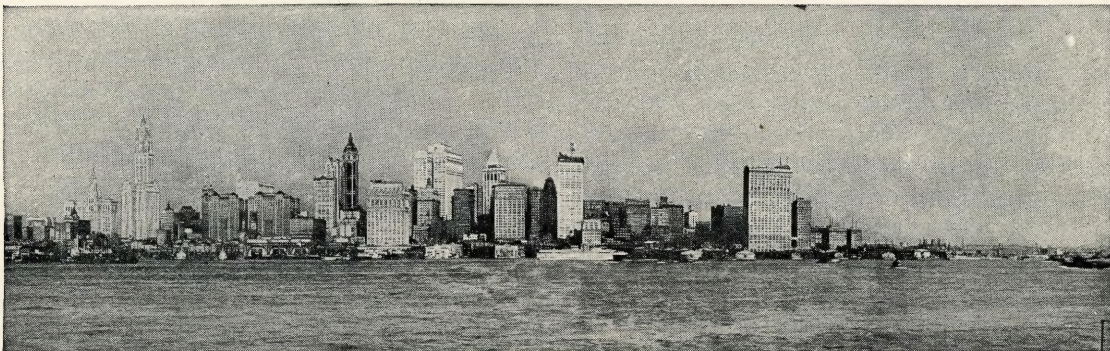


Photo: Brown Bros., New York.

SKY-LINE OF NEW YORK, FROM JERSEY CITY, N.J.

as rapidly as possible, and then leave them free to decide their own fate. I did not believe in setting the time-limit within which we would give them independence, because I did not believe it wise to try to forecast how soon they would be fit for self-government; and once having made the promise, I would have felt that it was imperative to keep it. Within a few months of my assuming office we had stamped out the last armed resistance in the Philippines that was not of merely sporadic character; and as soon as peace was secured, we turned our energies to developing the islands in the interests of the natives. We established schools everywhere; we built roads; we administered an even-handed justice; we did everything possible to encourage agriculture and industry; and in constantly increasing measure we employed natives to do their own governing, and finally provided a legislative chamber. . . . We are governing, and have been governing the islands in the interests of the Filipinos themselves. If, after due time the Filipinos themselves decide that they do not wish to be thus governed, then I trust that we will leave; but when we do leave, it must be distinctly understood that we retain no protectorate—and above all that we take part in no joint protectorate—over the islands, and give them no guarantee, of neutrality or otherwise; that in short, we are absolutely quit of responsibility for them, of every kind and description.”¹

This is an entirely different outlook from that of a British or French foreign office or colonial office official. But it is not very widely different from the spirit that created the Dominions of Canada, South Africa, and Australia, and brought forward the three Home Rule Bills for Ireland. It is in the older and more characteristic English tradition from which the Declaration of Independence derives. It sets aside, without discussion, the detestable idea of “subject peoples.”

Here we will not enter into political complications attendant upon the making of the Panama

Canal, for they introduce no fresh light upon this interesting question of the American method in world politics. The history of Panama is American history purely. But manifestly just as the political structure of the Union was a new thing in the world, so too were its relations with the world beyond its borders.²

§ 7

We have been at some pains to examine the state of mind of Europe and of America in regard to international relations in the years that led up to the world tragedy of 1914; because, as more and more people are coming to recognize, that great war or some such war was a necessary consequence of the mentality of the period. All the things that men and nations do are the outcome of instinctive motives reacting upon the ideas which talk and books and newspapers and schoolmasters and so forth have put into people's heads. Physical necessities, pestilences, changes of climate, and the like outer things may deflect and distort the growth of human history, but its living root is thought.

All human history is fundamentally a history of ideas. Between the man of to-day and the Cro-Magnard the physical and mental differences

² An unfriendly critic might denounce the treaty-making power of the United States, and the machinery by which it operates, as complicated and cumbersome, ill adapted to the complex demands of international intercourse, slow in action and uncertain in outcome. The requirement of a two-thirds rather than a majority vote in the Senate he might criticize not unjustly as a dubious excess of caution. . . . Believe me, the American people are like for many years to accomplish through this means their compacts with mankind. The checks and balances by which it is surrounded, the free and full debate which it allows, are in their eyes virtues rather than defects. They rejoice in the fact that all engagements which affect their destinies must be spread upon the public records, and that there is not, and there never can be, a secret treaty binding them either in law or in morals. Looking back upon a diplomatic history which is not without its chapters of success, they feel that on the whole the scheme the fathers builded has served the children well. With a conservatism in matters of government as great perhaps as that of any people in the world, they will suffer much inconvenience and run the risk of occasional misunderstanding before they make a change.—J. W. Davis (U.S.A. Ambassador to Britain), *The Treaty Making Power of the United States*. (Oxf. Univ. Brit. Am. Club. Paper No. 1.)

¹ One very good reason for the provisional retention of the Philippines under American control is the certainty that the “Moros,” the Muhammadan peoples of Palawan, and the southern islands of the main groups would proceed to conquer the “Christian” Filipinos, and that after a welter of civil war and destruction, Japan or some other outside Power would be appealed to to intervene.

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are very slight; their essential difference lies in the extent and content of the mental background which we have acquired in the five or six hundred generations that intervene.

We are too close to the events of the Great War to pretend that this *Outline* can record the verdict of history thereupon, but we may hazard the guess that when the passions of the conflict have faded, it will be Germany that will be most blamed for bringing it about, and she will be blamed not because she was morally and intellectually very different from her neighbours, but because she had the common disease of imperialism in its most complete and energetic form. No self-respecting historian, however

German dreams were those of Russia, which was scheming for an extension of the Slav ascendancy to Constantinople and through Serbia to the Adriatic. These lines of ambition lay across one another and were mutually incompatible. The feverish state of affairs in the Balkans was largely the outcome of the intrigues and propagandas sustained by the German and Slav schemes. Turkey turned for support to Germany, Serbia to Russia. Roumania and Italy, both Latin in tradition, both nominally allies of Germany, pursued remoter and deeper schemes in common. Ferdinand, the Tsar of Bulgaria, was following still darker ends; and the squalid mysteries of the Greek court, whose

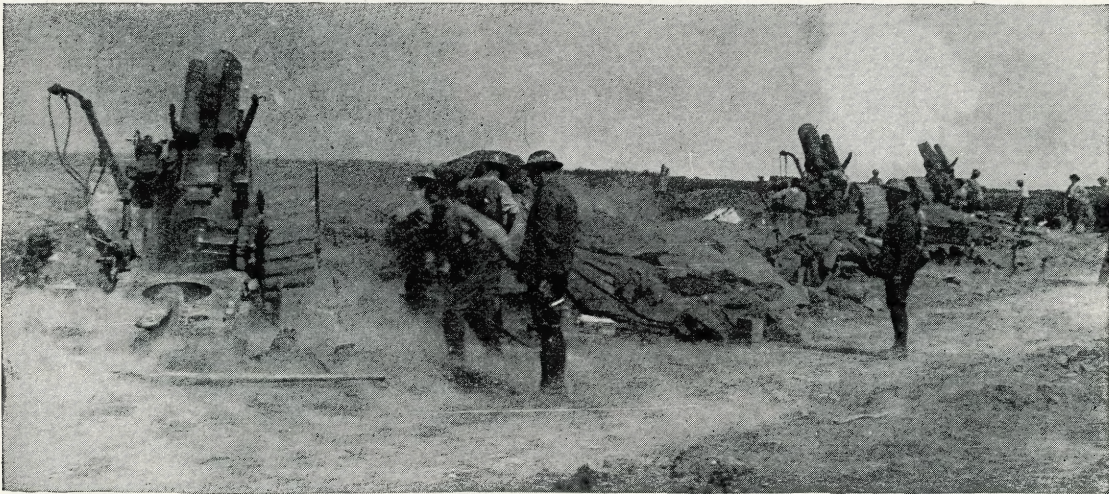


Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HEAVY ARTILLERY IN ACTION.

superficial and popular his aims may be, can countenance the legend, produced by the stresses of the war, that the German is a sort of human being more cruel and abominable than any other variety of men. All the great states of Europe before 1914 were in a condition of aggressive nationalism and drifting towards war; the government of Germany did but lead the general movement. She fell into the pit first, and she floundered deepest. She became the dreadful example at which all her fellow sinners could cry out.

For long Germany and Austria had been plotting an extension of German influence eastward through Asia Minor to the East. The German idea was crystallized in the phrase "Berlin to Bagdad." Antagonized to the

king was the German Kaiser's brother-in-law, are beyond our present powers of inquiry.

But the tangle did not end with Germany on the one hand and Russia on the other. The greed of Germany in 1871 had made France her inveterate enemy. The French people, aware of their inability to recover their lost provinces by their own strength, had conceived exaggerated ideas of the power and helpfulness of Russia. The French people had subscribed enormously to Russian loans. France was the ally of Russia. If the German Powers made war upon Russia, France would certainly attack them.

Now the short Eastern French frontier was very strongly defended. There was little prospect of Germany repeating the successes of

1870-71 against that barrier. But the Belgian frontier of France was longer and less strongly defended. An attack in overwhelming force on France through Belgium might repeat 1870 on a larger scale. The French left might be swung back south-eastwardly on Verdun as a pivot, and crowded back upon its right, as one shuts an open razor. This scheme the German strategists had worked out with great care and elaboration. Its execution involved an outrage upon the law of nations because Prussia had undertaken to guarantee the neutrality of Belgium and had no quarrel with her, and it involved the risk of bringing in Great Britain (which power was also pledged to protect Belgium) against Germany. Yet the Germans believed that their fleet had grown strong enough to make Great Britain hesitate to interfere, and with a view to possibilities they had constructed a great system of strategic railways to the Belgian frontier, and made every preparation for the execution of this scheme. So they might hope to strike down France at one blow, and deal at their leisure with Russia.

In 1914 all things seemed moving together in favour of the two Central Powers. Russia, it is true, had been recovering since 1906, but only very slowly; France was distracted by financial scandals. The astounding murder of M. Calmette, the editor of the *Figaro*, by the wife of M. Caillaux, the Minister of Finance, brought these to a climax in March; Britain, all Germany was assured, was on the verge of a civil war in Ireland. Repeated efforts were made both by foreign and English people to get some definite statement of what Britain would do if Germany and Austria assailed France and Russia; but the British Foreign Secretary maintained a front of heavy ambiguity up to the very day of the British entry into the war.¹ As a consequence, there was a feeling on the Continent that Britain would either not fight or delay fighting, and this may have encouraged

Germany to go on threatening France. Events were precipitated on June 28th by the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian Empire, when on a state visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. Here was a timely excuse to set the armies marching. "It is now or never," said the German Emperor.² Serbia was accused of instigating the murderers, and notwithstanding the fact that Austrian commissioners reported that there was no evidence to implicate the Serbian government, the Austro-Hungarian government contrived to press this grievance towards war. On July 23rd Austria discharged an ultimatum at Serbia, and, in spite of a practical submission on the part of Serbia, and of the efforts of Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, to call a conference of the Powers, declared war against Serbia on July 28th.

Russia mobilized her army on July 30th, and on August 1st Germany declared war upon her. German troops crossed into French territory next day, and, simultaneously with the delivery of an ultimatum to the unfortunate Belgians, the big flanking movement through Luxembourg and Belgium began. Westward rode the scouts and advance guards. Westward rushed a multitude of automobiles packed with soldiers. Enormous columns of grey-clad infantry followed; round-eyed, fair young Germans they were for the most part—law-abiding, educated youngsters who had never yet seen a shot fired in anger. "This was war," they were told. They had to be bold and ruthless. Some of them did their best to carry out these militarist instructions at the expense of the ill-fated Belgians.

A disproportionate fuss has been made over the detailed atrocities in Belgium, disproportionate, that is, in relation to the fundamental atrocity of August 1914, which was the invasion of Belgium. Given that, the casual shootings and lootings, the wanton destruction of property, the plundering of inns and of food and drink shops by hungry and weary men, and the consequent rapes and incendiarism follow naturally enough. Only very simple people believe that an army in the field can maintain as high a level of honesty, decency, and justice as a settled community at home. And the tradition of

¹ I think his policy was quite clear. He said to Germany, "If you bring on war, you must expect England to support France and Russia." To France and Russia he said: "If you are unreasonable, do not expect England to support you." He thus brought pressure to bear on both sides. G. M.

An illuminating book on the causes of the war is Lord Loreburn's *How the War Came*.

H. H. J.

² Kautsky's report on the origin of the war.



Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE FLANDERS MUD—A TYPICAL SCENE IN THE YPRES SALIENT. IN THE FOREGROUND ARE THE RIBS OF A GERMAN PILL-BOX.

the Thirty Years War still influenced the Prussian army. It has been customary in the countries allied against Germany to treat all this vileness and bloodshed of the Belgian months as though nothing of the sort had ever happened before, and as if it were due to some distinctively evil strain in the German character. They were nicknamed "Huns." But nothing could be less like the systematic destructions of the nomads (who once proposed to exterminate the entire Chinese population in order to restore China to pasture) than the German crimes in Belgium. Much of that crime was the drunken brutality of men who for the first time in their lives were free to use lethal weapons, much of it was the hysterical violence of men shocked at their own proceedings and in deadly fear of the revenge of the people whose country they had outraged, and much of it was done under duress because of the theory that men should be terrible in warfare and that populations are best subdued by fear. The German common people were bundled from an orderly obedience into this war in such a manner that atrocities were bound to ensue. They certainly did horrible and disgusting things. But any people

who had been worked up for war and led into war as the Germans were, would have behaved in a similar manner.

On the night of August 2nd, while most of Europe, still under the tranquil inertias of half a century of peace, still in the habitual enjoyment of such a widely diffused plenty and cheapness and freedom as no man living will ever see again, was thinking about its summer holidays, the little Belgian village of Visé was ablaze, and stupefied rustics were being led out and shot because it was alleged someone had fired on the invaders. The officers who ordered these acts, the men who obeyed, must surely have felt scared at the strangeness of the things they did. Most of them had never yet seen a violent death. And they had set light not to a village, but a world. It was the beginning of the end of an age of comfort, confidence, and gentle and seemly behaviour in Europe.

So soon as it was clear that Belgium was to be invaded, Great Britain ceased to hesitate, and (at eleven at night on August 4th) declared war upon Germany. The following day a German mine-laying vessel was caught off the Thames mouth by the cruiser *Amphion* and sunk,—the

first time that the British and Germans had ever met in conflict under their own national flags upon land or water. . . .

All Europe still remembers the strange atmosphere of those eventful sunny August days, the end of the Armed Peace. For nearly half a century the Western world had been tranquil and had seemed *safe*. Only a few middle-aged and ageing people in France had had any practical experience of warfare. The newspapers spoke of a world catastrophe, but that conveyed very little meaning to those for whom the world had always seemed secure, who were indeed almost incapable of thinking of it as otherwise than secure. In Britain particularly for some weeks the peace-time routine continued in a slightly dazed fashion. It was like a man still walking about the world unaware that he has contracted a fatal disease which will alter every routine and habit in his life. People went on with their summer holidays; shops reassured their customers with the announcement "business as usual." There was much talk and excitement when the newspapers came, but it was the talk and excitement of spectators who have no vivid sense of participation in the catastrophe that was presently to involve them all.

§ 8¹

We will now review very briefly the main phases of the world struggle which had thus commenced. Planned by Germany,

A Summary of the Great War up to 1917. it began with a swift attack designed to "knock out" France while

Russia was still getting her forces together in the East. For a time all went well. Military science is never up to date under modern conditions, because military men are as a class unimaginative; there are always at any date undeveloped inventions capable of disturbing current tactical and strategic practice which the military intelligence has declined. The

German plan had been made for some years; it was a stale plan; it could probably have been foiled at the outset by a proper use of entrenchments and barbed wire and machine guns, but the French were by no means as advanced in their military science as the Germans, and they trusted to methods of open warfare that were at least fourteen years behind the times. They had a proper equipment neither of barbed wire nor machine guns, and there was a ridiculous tradition that the Frenchman did not fight well behind earthworks. The Belgian frontier was defended by the fortress of Liège, ten or twelve years out of date, with forts whose armament had been furnished and fitted in many cases by German contractors; and the French north-eastern frontier was very badly equipped. Naturally the German armament firm of Krupp had provided nutcrackers for these nuts in the form of exceptionally heavy guns firing high explosive shell. These defences proved therefore to be mere traps for their garrisons. The French attacked and failed in the Southern Ardennes. The German hosts swung round the French left with an effect of being irresistible; Liège fell on August 9th, Brussels was reached on August 20th, and the small British army of about 70,000, which had arrived in Belgium, was struck at Mons (August 22nd) in overwhelming force, and driven backward in spite of the very deadly rifle tactics it had learnt during the South African War. (The German troops could not believe that the British were using rifles and not machine guns against them). The little British force was pushed aside westward, and the German right swept down so as to leave Paris to the west and crumple the entire French army back upon itself.

So confident was the German higher command at this stage of having won the war, that by the end of August German troops were already being withdrawn for the Eastern front, where the Russians were playing havoc in East and West Prussia. And then came the French counter-attack, strategically a very swift and brilliant counter-attack. The French struck back on their centre, they produced an unexpected army on their left, and the small British army, shaken but reinforced, was still fit to play a worthy part in the counter-stroke. The German right overran itself, lost its cohesion,

¹ For the common soldier's view of this last war there is no book better than *Le Feu* by Barbusse. An illustrated book of great quaintness, beauty, and veracity is André Hellé's *Le Livre des Heures*. No other book recalls so completely the *feel* and effect of the phases of the war. An admirably written and very wise book is Philip Gibbs' *Realities of War*. Some light on the peculiar difference of the fighting of the Great War from any previous warfare will be found in McCurdy's *War Neuroses* and Eder's book on the same subject.



and was driven back from the Marne to the Aisne (Battle of the Marne, September 6th to 10th). It would have been driven back further had it not had the art of entrenchment in reserve. Upon the Aisne it stood and dug itself in. The heavy guns, the high explosive shell, the tanks, needed by the Allies to smash up these entrenchments, did not yet exist.

The Battle of the Marne shattered the original German plan. For a time France was saved. But the German was not defeated; he had still a great offensive superiority in men and equipment. His fear of the Russian in the East had been relieved by a tremendous victory at Tannenberg. His next phase was a headlong, less elaborately planned campaign to outflank the left of the allied armies and to seize the Channel ports and cut off supplies coming from Britain to France. Both armies extended to the west in a sort of race to the coast. Then the Germans, with a great superiority of guns and equipment, struck at the British round and about

Ypres. They came very near to a break through, but the British held them.

The war on the Western front settled down to trench warfare. Neither side had the science and equipment needed to solve the problem of breaking through modern entrenchments and entanglements, and both sides were now compelled to resort to scientific men, inventors, and such-like unmilitary persons for counsel and help in their difficulty. At that time the essential problem of trench warfare had already been solved; there existed in England, for instance, the model of a tank, which would have given the Allies a swift and easy victory before 1916; but the professional military mind is by necessity an inferior and unimaginative mind; no man of high intellectual quality would willingly imprison his gifts in such a calling; nearly all supremely great soldiers have been either inexperienced fresh-minded young men like Alexander, Napoleon, and Hoche, politicians turned soldiers like Julius Cæsar, nomads like the Hun

and Mongol captains, or amateurs like Cromwell and Washington; whereas this war, after fifty years of militarism, was a hopelessly professional war; from first to last it was impossible to get it out of the hands of the regular generals, and neither the German nor Allied headquarters were disposed to regard an invention with toleration that would destroy their traditional methods.¹ The tank was not only disagreeably strange to these military gentlemen, but it gave an unprofessional protection to the common soldiers within it. The Germans, however, did make some innovations. In February (28th) they produced a rather futile novelty, the flame projector, the user of which was in constant danger of being burnt alive, and in April, in the midst of a second great offensive upon the British (Second Battle of Ypres, April 17th to May 17th), they employed a cloud of poison gas. This horrible device was used against Algerian and Canadian troops; it shook them by the physical torture it inflicted, and by the anguish of those who died, but it failed to break through them. For some weeks chemists were of more importance than soldiers on the allied front, and within six weeks the defensive troops were already in possession of protective methods and devices.

For a year and a half, until July 1916, the Western front remained in a state of indecisive tension. There were heavy attacks on either side that ended in bloody repulses. The French made costly but glorious thrusts at Arras and in Champagne in 1915, the British at Loos. From Switzerland to the North Sea there ran two continuous lines of entrenchment, sometimes at a distance of a mile or more, sometimes at a distance of a few feet (at Arras *e.g.*), and in

¹ "What mainly was wrong with our generalship was the system which put the High Command into the hands of a group of men belonging to the old school of war, unable by reason of their age and traditions to get away from rigid methods, and to become elastic in face of new conditions. Our Staff College had been hopelessly inefficient in its system of training, if I am justified in forming such an opinion from specimens produced by it, who had the brains of canaries and the manners of Potsdam. There was also a close corpora-tion among the officers of the Regular Army, so that they took the lion's share of Staff appointments, thus keeping out brilliant young men of the New Armies, whose brain power, to say the least of it, was on a higher level than that of the Sandhurst standard."

Philip Gibbs, *Realities of War*.

and behind these lines of trenches millions of men toiled, raided their enemies, and prepared for sanguinary and foredoomed offensives. In any preceding age these stagnant masses of men would have engendered a pestilence inevitably, but here again modern science had altered the conditions of warfare. Certain novel diseases appeared, trench feet, for instance, caused by prolonged standing in cold water, new forms of dysentery, and the like, but none developed to an extent to disable either combatant force. Behind this front the whole life of the belligerent nations was being turned more and more to the task of maintaining supplies of food, munitions, and, above all, men to supply the places of those who day by day were killed or mangled.² The Germans had had the luck to possess a considerable number of big siege guns intended for the frontier fortresses; these were now available for trench smashing with high explosive, a use no one had foreseen for them. The Allies throughout the first years were markedly inferior in their supply of big guns and ammunition, and their losses were steadily greater than the German. Mr. Asquith, the British Prime Minister, though a very fine practitioner in all the arts of Parliament, was wanting in creative ability; and it is probably due to the push and hustle of Mr. Lloyd George (who presently ousted him in December 1916) and the clamour of the British press that this inferiority of supplies was eventually rectified.³

There was a tremendous German onslaught upon the French throughout the first half of 1916 round and about Verdun. The Germans

² "The smart society of G.H.Q. was best seen at the Officers' Club at dinner-time. It was as much like musical comedy as any stage setting of war at the Gaiety. The band played rag-time and light music while the warriors fed, and all these generals and staff officers, with their decorations and Army bands, and polished buttons and crossed swords, were waited upon by little W.A.A.C.S., with the G.H.Q. colours tied up in bows on their hair, and khaki stockings under their short skirts, and fancy aprons. Such a chatter! Such bursts of light-hearted laughter! Such whisperings of secrets, of intrigues, and scandals in high places! Such callous-hearted courage when British soldiers were being blown to bits, gassed, blinded, maimed, and shell-shocked in places that were far, so very far, from G.H.Q."—Philip Gibbs, *The Realities of War*.

³ But see Roch, *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, and Arthur's *Life of Lord Kitchener*.

suffered enormous losses and were held, after pushing in the French lines for some miles. The French losses were as great or greater. "*Ils ne passeront pas*," said and sang the French infantry—and kept their word.

The Eastern German front was more extended and less systematically entrenched than the Western. For a time the Russian armies continued to press westward in spite of the Tannenberg disaster. They conquered nearly the whole of Galicia from the Austrians, took Lemberg on September 2nd, 1914, and the great fortress of Przemyśl on March 22nd, 1915. But after the Germans had failed to break the Western

Goritzia (which fell in the summer of 1916), but her intervention was of little use at that time to either Russia or the two Western Powers. She merely established another line of trench warfare among the high mountains of her picturesque north-eastern frontier.

While the main fronts of the chief combatants were in this state of exhaustive deadlock, both sides were attempting to strike round behind the front of their adversaries. The Germans made a series of Zeppelin, and later of aeroplane raids upon Paris and the east of England. Ostensibly these aimed at depôts, munition works, and the like targets of military importance, but



Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A BIG RAILWAY GUN FIRING.

front of the Allies, and after an ineffective Allied offensive made without proper material,¹ they turned to Russia, and a series of heavy blows, with a novel use of massed artillery, were struck first in the south and then at the north of the Russian front. On June 22nd, Przemyśl was retaken, and the whole Russian line was driven back until Vilna (September 2nd) was in German hands.

In May 1915 (23rd) Italy joined the Allies, and declared war upon Austria. (Not until a year later did she declare war on Germany.) She pushed over her eastern boundary towards

practically they bombed promiscuously at inhabited places. At first these raiders dropped not very effective bombs, but later the size and quality of these missiles increased, considerable numbers of people were killed and injured, and very much damage was done. The English people were roused to a pitch of extreme indignation by these outrages.² Although the Germans had possessed Zeppelins for some years, no one in authority in Great Britain had thought out the proper methods of dealing with them, and it was not until late in

¹ "The want of an unlimited quantity of high explosive was a fatal bar to our success."—*The Times*, May 14th, 1915.

² But compare the British bombardment of Japanese towns noted in Chap. XXXIX, § 11. And aeroplane bombs and machine-gun fire have since been used by the British military authorities against Indian village crowds suspected of sedition.

1916 that an adequate supply of anti-aircraft guns was brought into play and that these raiders were systematically attacked by aeroplanes. Then came a series of Zeppelin disasters, and after the spring of 1917 they ceased to be used for any purpose but sea scouting, and their place as raiders was taken by large aeroplanes (the Gothas). The visits of these latter machines to London and the east of England became systematic after the summer of 1917. All through the winter of 1917-18, London on every moonlight night became familiar with the banging of warning maroons, the shrill whistles of the police alarm, the hasty clearance of the streets, the distant rumbling of scores and hundreds of anti-aircraft guns growing steadily to a wild uproar of thuds and crashes, the swish of flying shrapnel, and at last, if any of the raiders got through the barrage, with the dull heavy bang of the bursting bombs. Then presently, amidst the diminuendo of the gun fire would come the inimitable rushing sound of the fire brigade engines and the hurry of the ambulances. . . . War was brought home to every Londoner by these experiences.

While the Germans were thus assailing the nerve of their enemy home population through the air, they were also attacking the overseas trade of the British by every means in their power. At the outset of the war they had various trade destroyers scattered over the world, and a squadron of powerful modern cruisers in the Pacific, namely, the *Scharnhorst*, the *Gneisenau*, the *Leipzig*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Dresden*. Some of the detached cruisers, and particularly the *Emden*, did a considerable amount of commerce destroying before they

were hunted down, and the main squadron caught an inferior British force off the coast of Chile and sank the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* on November 1st, 1914. A month later these German ships were themselves pounced upon by a British force, and all (except the *Dresden*) sunk by Admiral Sturdee in the Battle of the Falkland Isles. After this conflict the Allies remained in undisputed possession of the surface of the sea, a supremacy which the great naval Battle of Jutland (May 1st, 1916) did nothing to shake. The Germans concentrated their attention more and more upon submarine warfare. From the beginning of the war they had had considerable submarine successes. On one day, September 22nd, 1914, they sank three powerful cruisers, the *Aboukir*, the *Hogue*, and the *Cressy*, with 1,473 men. They continued to levy a toll upon British shipping throughout the war; at first they hailed and examined passenger and mercantile shipping, but this practice they discontinued for fear of traps, and in the spring of 1915 they began to sink ships without notice. In May 1915 they sank the great passenger liner, the *Lusitania*, without any warning, drowning a number of American citizens. This embittered American feeling against them, but the possibility of injuring and perhaps reducing Britain by a submarine blockade was so great, that they persisted in a more and more intensified submarine campaign, regardless of the danger of dragging the United States unto the circle of their enemies.

Meanwhile, Turkish forces, very ill-equipped, were making threatening gestures at Egypt across the Desert of Sinai.

And while the Germans were thus striking at

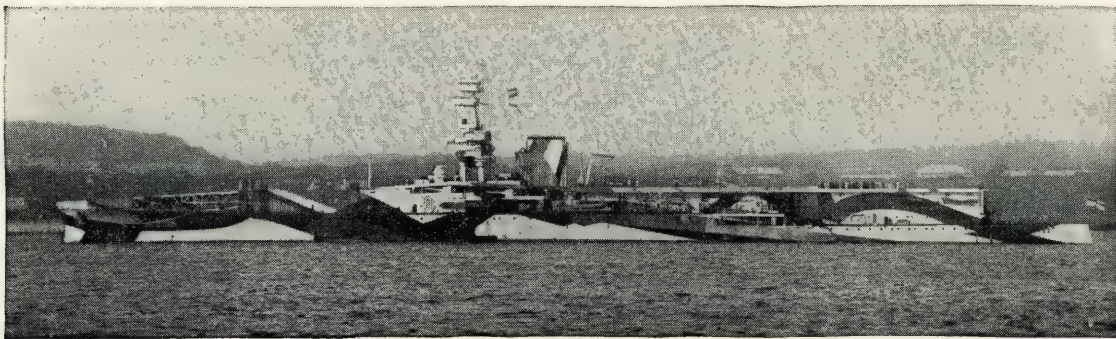


Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A CAMOUFLAGED SHIP—H.M.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER "FURIOUS."

Britain, their least accessible and most formidable antagonist, through the air and under the sea, the French and British were also embarking upon a disastrous flank attack in the east upon the Central Powers through Turkey. The Gallipoli campaign was finely imagined, but disgracefully executed. Had it succeeded, the Allies would have captured Constantinople in 1915. But the Turks were given two months' notice of the project by a premature bombardment of the Dardanelles in February, the scheme was also probably betrayed through the Greek Court, and when at last British and French forces were landed upon the Gallipoli peninsula in April, they found the Turks well entrenched and better equipped for trench warfare¹ than themselves. The Allies trusted for heavy artillery to the great guns of the ships, which were comparatively useless for battering down entrenchments, and among every other sort of thing that they had failed to foresee, they had not foreseen hostile submarines. Several great battleships were lost; they went down in the same clear waters over which the ships of Xerxes had once sailed to their fate at Salamis. The story of the Gallipoli campaign from the side of the Allies is at once heroic and pitiful, a story of courage and incompetence, and of life, material, and prestige wasted, culminating in a withdrawal in January 1916.²

This failure was due in part to the refusal of the Greeks to co-operate in the adventure. For a year and a half the Greek king, the brother-in-law of the Kaiser, being protected by friends in high quarters on the Allied side, tricked and misled the Allies, and wasted the lives of great numbers of common British and French soldiers. In June 1917 he was forced to abdicate, but instead of permitting the Greeks, under their proper leader Venizelos, to follow their natural and traditional republican disposition, his son, Alexander, the Kaiser's nephew, was made king in his place—*by the Allies!* This Greek chapter in the story of the Great War still awaits

the investigations of the historian. It is at present a quite inexplicable story, and we give these preposterous facts with no attempt to rationalize them.

Linked up closely with this Greek vacillation was the entry of Bulgaria into the war (October 12th, 1915). The King of Bulgaria had hesitated for more than a year to make any decision between the two sides. Now the manifest failure of the British at Gallipoli, coupled with a strong Austro-German attack in Serbia, swung him over to the Central Powers. While the Serbs were hotly engaged with the Austro-German invaders upon the Danube, he attacked Serbia in the rear, and in a few weeks the country had been completely overrun. The Serbian army made a terrible retreat through the mountains of Albania to the coast, where its remains were rescued by an Allied fleet.

An Allied force landed at Salonika in Greece, and pushed inland towards Monastir, but was unable to render any effectual assistance to the Serbians. It was the Salonika plan which sealed the fate of the Gallipoli expedition.

To the east, in Mesopotamia, the British, using Indian troops chiefly, made a still remoter flank attack upon the Central Powers. An army, very ill provided for the campaign, was landed at Basra in the November of 1914, and pushed up towards Bagdad in the following year. It gained a victory at Ctesiphon, the ancient Arsacid and Sassanid capital within twenty-five miles of Bagdad, but the Turks were heavily reinforced, there was a retreat to Kut, and there the British army, under General Townshend, was surrounded and starved into surrender on April 29th, 1916.

All these campaigns in the air, under the seas, in Russia, Turkey, and Asia, were subsidiary to the main front, the front of decision, between Switzerland and the sea; and there the main millions lay entrenched, slowly learning the necessary methods of modern scientific warfare. There was a rapid progress in the use of the aeroplane. At the outset of the war this had been used chiefly for scouting, and by the Germans for the dropping of marks for the artillery. Such a thing as aerial fighting was unheard of. In 1916 the aeroplanes carried machine guns and fought in the air; their bombing work was increasingly important, they

¹ *E.g.* in hand grenades.

² For the flighty incapacity of the British military authorities in this adventure, see Sir Ian Hamilton's *Gallipoli Diary*. H. G. W.

It is only fair to the British Commander to add that the incapacity was that of the home authorities to understand his demands for men and material.

P. G.

had developed a wonderful art of aerial photography, and all the aerial side of artillery work, both with aeroplanes and observation balloons, had been enormously developed. But the military mind was still resisting the use of the tank, the obvious weapon for decision in trench warfare.

Many intelligent people outside military circles understood this quite clearly. The use of the tank against trenches was an altogether obvious expedient. Leonardo da Vinci invented an early tank, but what military "expert" has ever had the wits to study Leonardo? Soon after the South African War, in 1903, there were stories in magazines describing imaginary battles in which tanks figured, and a complete working model of a tank was shown to the British military authorities—who of course rejected it—in 1912. Tanks had been invented and re-invented before the war began. But had the matter rested entirely in the hands of the military, there would never have been any use of tanks. It was Mr. Winston Churchill, at that time at the British Admiralty, who insisted upon the manufacture of the first tanks, and it was in the teeth of the grimmest opposition that they were sent to France.¹ To the British navy and not to the army, military science owes the use of these devices. The German military authorities were equally set against them. In July, 1916, Sir Douglas Haig, the British commander-in-chief, began a great offensive which failed to break through the German line. In some places he advanced a few miles; in others he was completely repulsed. There was a huge slaughter of the new British armies. And he did not use tanks.

In September, when the season was growing too late for a sustained offensive, tanks first appeared in warfare. A few were put into action by the British in a not very intelligent fashion. Their effect upon the German was profound, they produced something like a panic, and there can be little doubt that had they been used in July in sufficient numbers and handled by a general of imagination and energy, they would have ended the war there and then. At that time the Allies were in greater strength than the Germans upon the Western front.

¹ See Stern, *Tanks 1914-1918*. See also Fuller *Tanks in the Great War*.

Russia, though fast approaching exhaustion, was still fighting, Italy was pressing the Austrians hard, and Rumania was just entering the war on the side of the Allies. But the waste of men in this disastrous July offensive, coupled with the obstinate neglect of the possibilities of the tanks by the military authorities, brought the Allied cause to the very brink of disaster.

Directly the British failure of July had reassured the Germans, they turned on the Rumanians, and the winter of 1916 saw the same fate overtake Rumania that had fallen upon Serbia in 1915. The year that had begun with the retreat from Gallipoli and the surrender of Kut, ended with the crushing of Rumania and with volleys fired at a landing party of French and British marines by a royalist crowd in the port of Athens. It looked as though King Constantine of Greece, that protégé of the Allied foreign offices, meant to lead his people in the footsteps of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. But the coast line of Greece is one much exposed to naval action. Greece was blockaded, and a French force from Salonika joined hands with an Italian force from Valona to cut the King of Greece off from his Central European friends.

On the whole, things looked much less dangerous for the Hohenzollern imperialism at the end of 1916 than they had done after the failure of the first great rush at the Marne. The Allies had wasted two years of opportunity. Belgium, Serbia, and Rumania, and large areas of France and Russia, were occupied by Austro-German troops. Counter-stroke after counter-stroke had failed, and Russia was now tottering towards a collapse. Had Germany been ruled with any wisdom, she might have made a reasonable peace at this time. But the touch of success had intoxicated her imperialists. They wanted not safety, but triumph; not world welfare, but world empire. "World power or downfall" was their formula; it gave their antagonists no alternative but a fight to a conclusive end.

§ 9

Early in 1917 Russia collapsed.

By this time the enormous strain of the war was telling hardly upon all the European populations. There had been a great disorganization of transport everywhere, a dis-

continuance of the normal repairs and replacements of shipping, railways, and the like, a using-up of material of all sorts, a dwindling of food production, a withdrawal of greater and greater masses of men from industry, a cessation of educational work, and a steady diminution of the ordinary securities and honesties of life. Nowhere was the available directive ability capable of keeping a

The Great War from the Russian Collapse to the Armistice.



Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A SENTRY AT THE JUNCTION OF TWO TRENCHES.

grip upon affairs in the face of the rupture of habitual bonds and the replacement of the subtle disciplines of peace by the clumsy brutalities of military "order." More and more of the European population was being transferred from surroundings and conditions to which it was accustomed, to novel circumstances which distressed, stimulated, and demoralized it. But Russia suffered first and most from this universal pulling up of civiliza-

tion from its roots. The Russian autocracy was dishonest and incompetent. The Tsar, like several of his ancestors, had now given way to a crazy pietism, and the court was dominated by a religious impostor, Rasputin, whose cult was one of unspeakable foulness, a reeking scandal in the face of the world. Beneath the rule of this dirty mysticism, indolence and scoundrelism mismanaged the war. The Russian common soldiers were sent into battle without guns to support them, without even rifle ammunition; they were wasted by their officers and generals in a delirium of militarist enthusiasm. For a time they seemed to be suffering mutely as the beasts suffer; but there is a limit to the endurance even of the most ignorant. A profound disgust for the Tsardom was creeping through these armies of betrayed and wasted men. From the close of 1915 onwards Russia was a source of deepening anxiety to her Western allies. Throughout 1916 she remained largely on the defensive, and there were rumours of a separate peace with Germany. She gave little help to Rumania.

On December 29th, 1916, the monk Rasputin was murdered at a dinner-party in Petrograd, and a belated attempt was made to put the Tsardom in order. By March things were moving rapidly; food riots in Petrograd developed into a revolutionary insurrection; there was an attempted suppression of the Duma, the representative body, attempted arrests of liberal leaders, the formation of a provisional government under Prince Lvoff, and an abdication (March 15th) by the Tsar. For a time it seemed that a moderate and controlled revolution might be possible—perhaps under a new Tsar. Then it became evident that the destruction of confidence in Russia had gone too far for any such adjustments. The Russian people was sick to death of the old order of things in Europe, of Tsars and of wars and Great Powers; it wanted relief, and that speedily, from unendurable miseries. The Allies had no understanding of Russian realities; their diplomatists were ignorant of Russian, genteel persons, with their attention directed to the Russian Court rather than Russia, and they blundered steadily with the new situation. There was little goodwill among the diplomatists for republicanism, and a manifest dis-



A TANK IN ACTION



position to embarrass the new government as much as possible. At the head of the Russian republican government was an eloquent and picturesque leader Kerensky, who found himself assailed by the deep forces of a profounder revolutionary movement, the "social revolution," at home and cold-shouldered by the Allied governments abroad. His allies would let him give the Russian people neither land nor peace beyond their frontiers. The French and the British press pestered their exhausted ally for a fresh offensive, but when presently the Germans made a strong attack by sea and land upon Riga, the British Admiralty quailed before the prospect of a Baltic expedition in relief. The new Russian republic had to fight unsupported. In spite of their great naval predominance, it is to be noted that the Allies, except for some submarine attacks, left the Germans the complete mastery of the Baltic throughout the war.

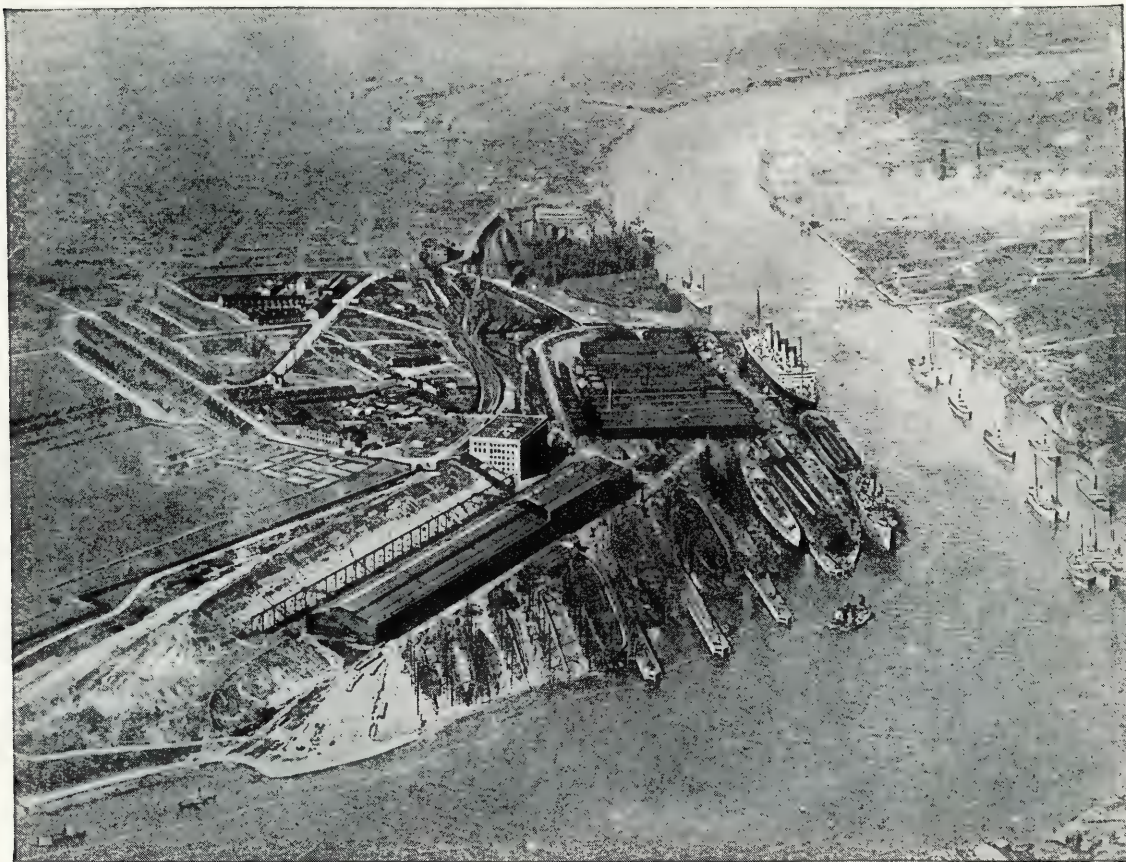
The Russian masses were resolute to end the war. There had come into existence in Petrograd a body representing the workers and com-

mon soldiers, the Soviet; and this body clamoured for an international conference of socialists at Stockholm. Food riots were occurring in Berlin at this time, war weariness in Austria and Germany was profound, and there can be little doubt, in the light of subsequent events, that such a conference would have precipitated a reasonable peace on democratic lines in 1917 and a German revolution. Kerensky implored his Western allies to allow this conference to take place, but, fearful of a worldwide outbreak of socialism and republicanism, they refused, in spite of the favourable response of a small

majority of the British Labour Party. Without either moral or physical help from the Allies the "moderate" Russian republic still fought on and made a last desperate offensive effort in July. It failed after some preliminary successes and another great slaughtering of Russians.

The limit of Russian endurance was reached. Mutinies broke out in the Russian armies, and particularly upon the northern front, and upon November 7th, 1917, Kerensky's government was overthrown and power was seized by the Soviet Government, dominated by the Bolshevik-socialists under Lenin, and pledged to make peace regardless of the Western Powers. Russia passed definitely "out of the war."

In the spring of 1917 there had been a costly and ineffective French attack upon the Champagne front which had failed to break through and sustained enormous losses. Here, then, by the end of 1917, was a phase of events altogether favourable to Germany, had her government been fighting for security and well-being rather than for pride and victory. But to the very end, to the pitch of final exhaustion, the people



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WAR INDUSTRY: THE ARMSTRONG SHIPYARD AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, OF SIR W. G. ARMSTRONG, WHITWORTH & CO., LTD. "AQUITANIA" BEING RECONDITIONED ALONGSIDE QUAY.

Walker Shipyard in background.

of the Central Powers were held to the effort to realize an impossible world imperialism.

To that end it was necessary that Britain should be not merely resisted, but subjugated, and in order to do that Germany had already dragged America into the circle of her enemies. Throughout 1916 the submarine campaign had been growing in intensity, but hitherto it had respected neutral shipping. In January 1917, a complete "blockade" of Great Britain and France was proclaimed, and all neutral Powers were warned to withdraw their shipping from the British seas. An indiscriminate sinking of the world's shipping began which compelled the United States to enter the war in April (6th) 1917. Throughout 1917, while Russia was breaking up and becoming impotent, the American people was changing swiftly and steadily into a great military nation. And the unrestricted submarine campaign, for which the

German imperialists had accepted the risk of this fresh antagonist, was far less successful than had been hoped. The British navy proved itself much more inventive and resourceful than the British army; there was a rapid development of anti-submarine devices under water, upon the surface, and in the air; and after a month or so of serious destruction, the tale of submarine sinkings declined. The British found it necessary to put themselves upon food rations; but the regulations were well framed and ably administered, the public showed an excellent spirit and intelligence, and the danger of famine and social disorder was kept at arm's length.

Yet the German imperial government persisted in its course. If the submarine was not doing all that had been expected, and if the armies of America gathered like a thundercloud, yet Russia was definitely down; and in

October the same sort of autumn offensive that had overthrown Serbia in 1915 and Rumania in 1916 was now turned with crushing effect against Italy. The Italian front collapsed after the Battle of Caporetto, and the Austro-German armies poured down into Venetia and came almost within gunfire of Venice. Germany felt justified, therefore, in taking a high line with the Russian peace proposals, and the peace of Brest-Litovsk (March 2nd, 1918) gave the Western allies some intimation of what a German victory would mean to them: It was a crushing and exorbitant peace, dictated with the utmost arrogance of confident victors.

All through the winter German troops had been shifting from the Eastern to the Western front, and now, in the spring of 1918, the jaded enthusiasm of hungry, weary, and bleeding Germany was lashed up for the one supreme effort that was really and truly to end the war. For some months American troops had been in France, but the bulk of the American army was still across the Atlantic. It was high time for the final conclusive blow upon the Western front, if such a blow was ever to be delivered. The first attack was upon the British in the Somme region. The not very brilliant cavalry generals who were still in command of a front upon which cavalry was a useless encumbrance, were caught napping; and on March 21st, in "Gough's Disaster," a British army was driven back in such disorder as no British army had ever known before. Thousands of guns were lost, and scores of thousands of prisoners. Many of these losses were due to the utter incompetence of the higher command. No less than a hundred tanks were abandoned *because they ran out of petrol!* The British were driven back almost to Amiens.¹ Throughout April and May the Germans rained offensives on the Allied front. They came near to a break through in the north, and they made a great drive back to the Marne, which they reached again on May 30th, 1918.

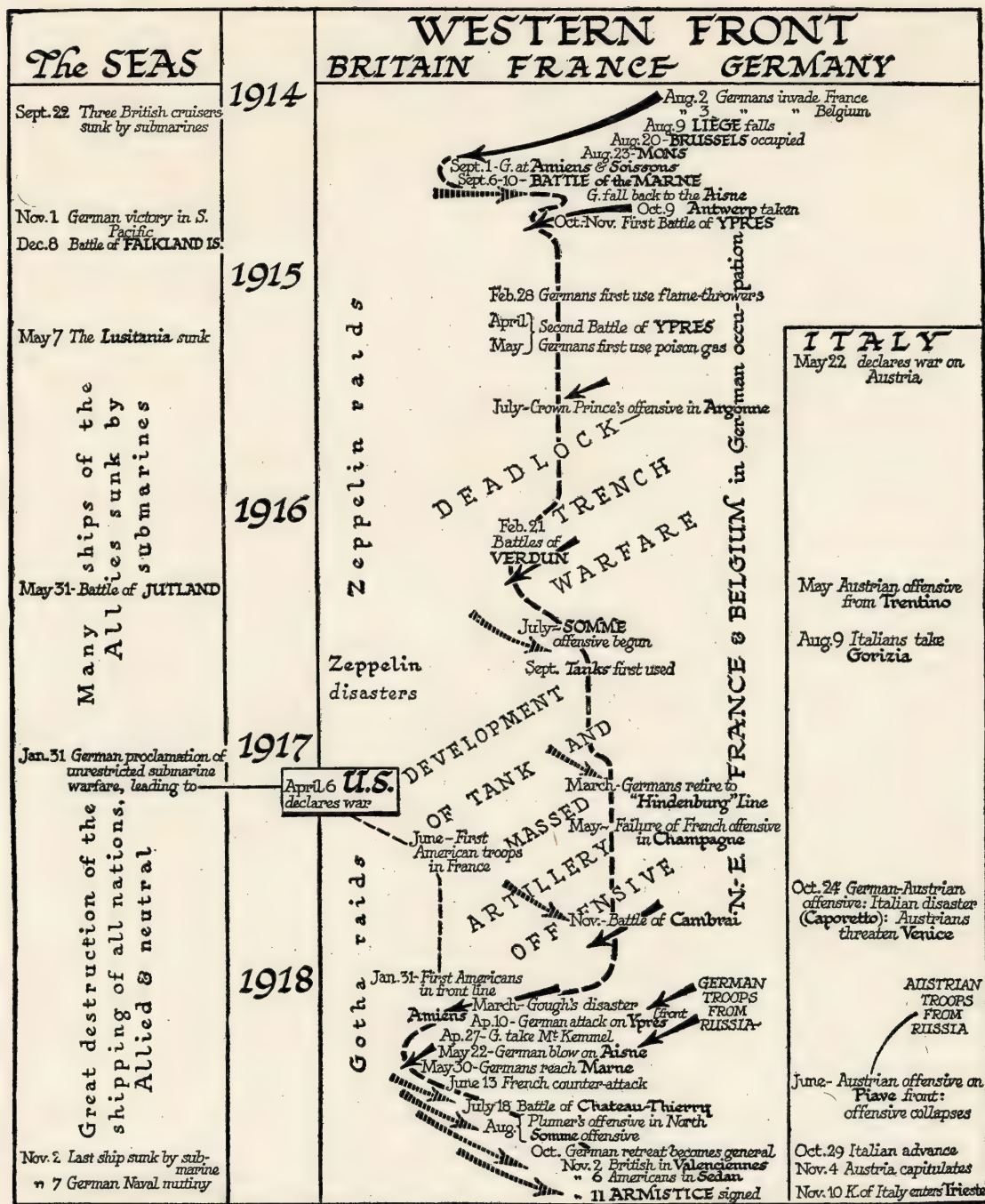
¹ "I found a general opinion among officers and men under the command of the Fifth Army that they had been victims of atrocious staff work, tragic in its consequence. From what I saw of some of the Fifth Army staff officers, I was of the same opinion. Some of these young gentlemen, and some of the elderly officers, were arrogant and supercilious, without revealing any sign of intelligence. If they had wisdom, it

This was the climax of the German effort. Behind it was nothing but an exhausted homeland. Fresh troops were hurrying from Britain across the Channel, and America was now pouring men into France by the hundred thousand. In June the weary Austrians made a last effort in Italy, and collapsed before an Italian counter-attack. Early in June the French began to develop a counter-attack in the Marne angle. By July the tide was turning, and the Germans were reeling back. The Battle of Château Thierry (July 18th) proved the quality of the new American armies. In August the British opened a great and successful thrust into Belgium, and the bulge of the German lines towards Amiens wilted and collapsed. Germany had finished. The fighting spirit passed out of her army, and October was a story of defeat and retreat along the entire Western front. Early in November British troops were in Valenciennes and Americans in Sedan. In Italy also the Austrian armies were in a state of disorderly retreat. But everywhere now the Hohenzollern and Habsburg forces were collapsing. The smash at the end was amazingly swift. Frenchmen and Englishmen could not believe their newspapers as day after day they announced the capture of more hundreds of guns and more thousands of prisoners.

In September a great Allied offensive against Bulgaria had produced a revolution in that country and peace proposals. Turkey had followed with a capitulation at the end of October, and Austro-Hungary on November 4th. There was an attempt to bring out the German Fleet for a last fight, but the sailors mutinied (November 7th).

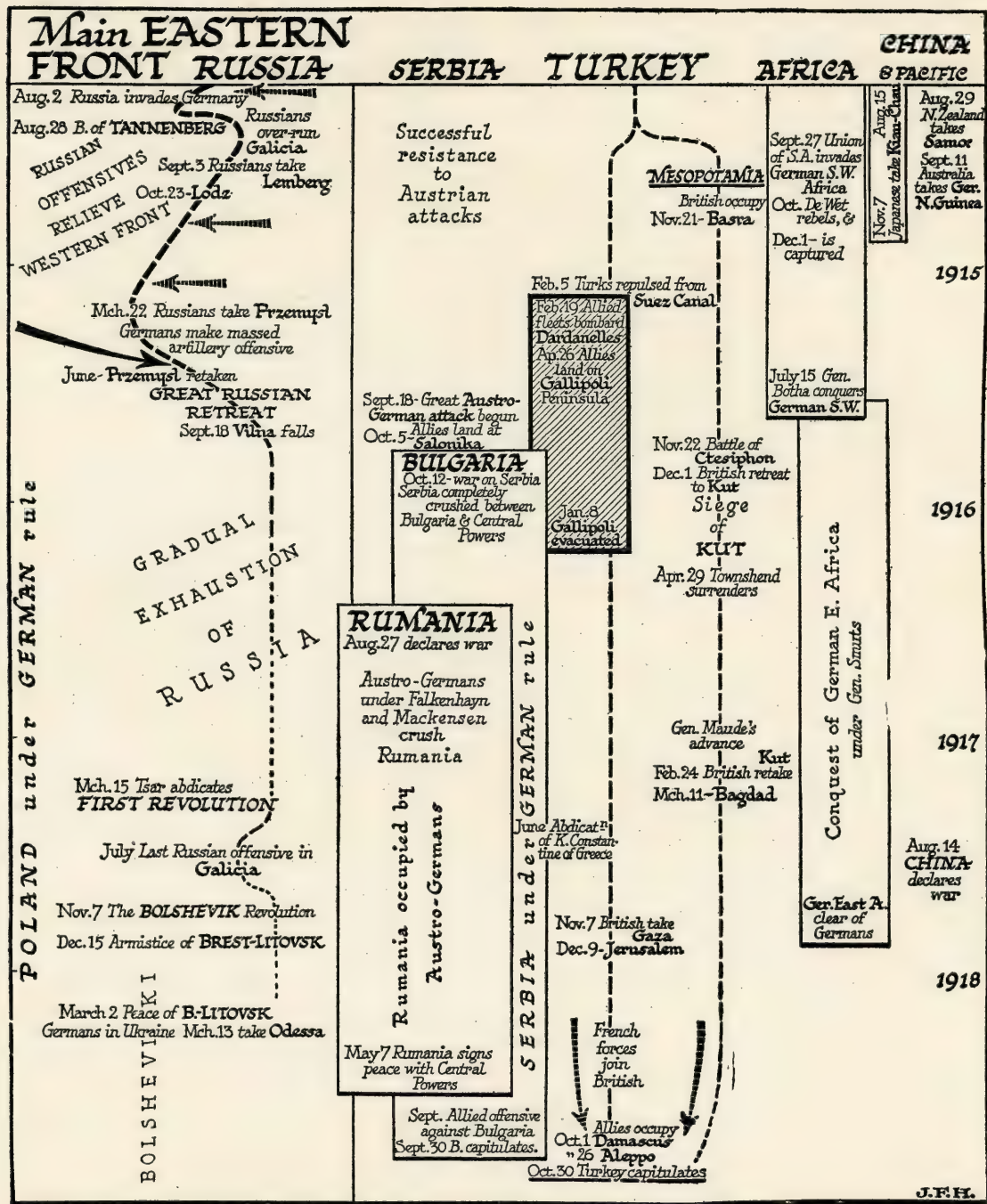
The Kaiser and the Crown Prince bolted hastily, and without a scrap of dignity, into Holland. It was like welshers bolting from a racecourse to escape a ducking. On November 11th an armistice was signed, and the war was at an end. . . .

was deeply camouflaged by an air of inefficiency. If they had knowledge, they hid it as a secret of their own. General Gough in Flanders, though personally responsible for many tragic happenings, was badly served by some of his subordinates, and battalion officers and divisional staffs raged against the whole of the Fifth Army organization, or lack of organization, with an extreme passion of speech."—Philip Gibbs, *Realities of War*.



For four years and a quarter the war had lasted, and gradually it had drawn nearly everyone, in the Western world at least, into its vortex. Upwards of ten millions of people had been actually killed through the fighting, another twenty or twenty-five million had died through the hardships and disorders entailed. Scores of millions were suffering and enfeebled

by under-nourishment and misery. A vast proportion of the living were now engaged in war work, in drilling and armament, in making munitions, in hospitals, in working as substitutes for men who had gone into the armies and the like. Business men had been adapting themselves to the more hectic methods necessary for profit in a world in a state of crisis. The



war had become, indeed, an atmosphere, a habit of life, a new social order. Then suddenly it ended.

In London the armistice was proclaimed about midday on November 11th. It produced a strange cessation of every ordinary routine. Clerks poured out of their offices and would not return; assistants deserted their

shops, omnibus drivers and the drivers of military lorries set out upon journeys of their own devising, with picked-up loads of astounded and cheering passengers going nowhere in particular and careless whither they went. Vast vacant crowds presently choked the streets, and every house and shop that possessed such adornments hung out flags. When night came, many

of the main streets, which had been kept in darkness for many months because of the air raids, were brightly lit. It was very strange to see thronging multitudes assembled in an artificial light again. Everyone felt aimless, with a kind of strained and aching relief. It was over at last. There would be no more killing in France, no more air raids—and things would get better. People wanted to laugh, and weep—and could do neither. Youths of spirit and young soldiers on leave formed thin noisy processions that shoved their way through the general drift, and did their best to make a jollification. A captured German gun was hauled from the Mall, where a vast array of such trophies had been set out, into Trafalgar Square, and its carriage burnt. Squibs and crackers were thrown about. But there was little concerted rejoicing. Nearly everyone had lost too much and suffered too much to rejoice with any fervour.¹

§ 10

The world in the year after the Great War was like a man who has had some vital surgical operation very roughly performed, and who is not yet sure whether he can now go on living or whether he has not been so profoundly shocked and injured that he will presently fall down and die. It was a world dazed and stunned. German militarist imperialism had been defeated, but at an overwhelming cost. It had come very near to victory. Everything went on, now that the strain of the conflict had ceased, rather laxly, rather weakly, and with a gusty and uncertain temper. There was a universal hunger for peace, a universal desire for the lost safety and liberty and prosperity of pre-war times, without any power of will to achieve and secure these things.

Just as with the Roman Republic under the long strain of the Punic War, so now there had been a great release of violence and cruelty, and a profound deterioration in financial and economic morality. Generous spirits had sacrificed themselves freely to the urgent demands

of the war, but the sly and base of the worlds of business and money had watched the convulsive opportunities of the time and secured a firm grip upon the resources and political power of their countries. Everywhere men who would have been regarded as shady adventurers before 1914 had acquired power and influence while better men toiled unprofitably. Such men as Lord Rhondda, the British food controller, killed themselves with hard work, while the war profiteer waxed rich and secured his grip upon press and party organization.

In the course of the war there had been extraordinary experiments in collective management in nearly all the belligerent countries. It was realized that the common expedients of peace-time commerce, the higgling of the market, the holding out for a favourable bargain, were incompatible with the swift needs of warfare. Transport, fuel, food supply, and the distribution of the raw materials not only of clothing, housing, and the like, but of everything needed for war munitions, had been brought under public control. No longer had farmers been allowed to under-farm; cattle had been put upon deer-parks and grass-lands ploughed up, with or without the owner's approval. Luxury building and speculative company promotion had been restrained. In effect, a sort of emergency socialist state had been established throughout belligerent Europe. It was rough-and-ready and wasteful, but it was more effective than the tangled incessant profit-seeking, the cornering and forestalling and incoherent productiveness of "private enterprise."

In the earlier years of the war there was a very widespread feeling of brotherhood and the common interest in all the belligerent states. The common men were everywhere sacrificing life and health for what they believed to be the common good of the state. In return, it was promised, there was to be less social injustice after the war, a more universal devotion to the common welfare. In Great Britain, for instance, Mr. Lloyd George was particularly insistent upon his intention to make the after-war Britain "a land fit for heroes." He foreshadowed the continuation of this new war communism into the peace period in discourses of great fire and beauty. In Great Britain,

¹ A very good account of the state of mind of Paris during and after the war is in W. P. Adams' *Paris Sees it Through*.

there was created a Ministry of Reconstruction, which was understood to be planning a new and more generous social order, better labour conditions, better housing, extended education, a complete and scientific revision of the economic system. Similar hopes of a better world sustained the common soldiers of France and Germany and Italy. It was premature disillusionment that caused the Russian collapse. So that two mutually dangerous streams of anticipation were running through the minds of men in Western Europe towards the end of the war. The rich and adventurous men, and particularly the new war profiteers, were making their plans to prevent such developments as that air transport should become a state property, and to snatch back manufactures, shipping, land transport, the public services generally, and the trade in staples from the hands of the commonweal into the grip of private profit; they were securing possession of newspapers and busying themselves with party caucuses and the like to that end; while the masses of common men were looking forward naïvely to a new state of society planned almost entirely in their interest and according to generous general ideas. The history of 1919 is largely the clash of these two streams of anticipation. There was a hasty selling off by the "business" government in control, of every remunerative public enterprise to private speculators. . . . By the middle of 1919 the labour masses throughout the world were manifestly disappointed and in a thoroughly bad temper. The British "Ministry of Reconstruction" and its foreign equivalents were exposed as a soothing sham. The common man felt he had been cheated. There was to be no reconstruction, but only a restoration of the old order—in the harsher form necessitated by the poverty of the new time.

For four years the drama of the war had obscured the social question which had been developing in the Western civilizations throughout the nineteenth century. Now that the war was over, this question reappeared gaunt and bare, as it had never been seen before.

And the irritations and hardships and the general insecurity of the new time were exacerbated by a profound disturbance of currency and credit. Money, a complicated growth of

conventions rather than a system of values, had been deprived within the belligerent countries of the support of a gold standard. Gold had been retained only for international trade, and every government had produced excessive quantities of paper money for domestic use. With the breaking down of the war-time barriers the international exchange became a wildly fluctuating confusion, a source of distress to everyone except a few gamblers and wily speculators. Prices rose and rose—with an infuriating effect upon the wage-earner. On the one hand was the employer resisting his demands for more pay; on the other hand, food, house-room, and clothing were being steadily cornered against him. And, which was the essential danger of the situation, *he had lost any confidence he had ever possessed that any patience or industrial willingness he displayed would really alleviate the shortages and inconveniences by which he suffered.*

In the speeches of politicians towards the close of 1919 and the spring of 1920, there was manifest an increasing recognition of the fact that what is called the capitalist system—the private ownership system that is, in which private profit is the working incentive—was on its trial. It had to produce general prosperity, they admitted, or it had to be revised. It is interesting to note such a speech as that of Mr. Lloyd George, the British Premier, delivered on Saturday, December 6th, 1919. Mr. Lloyd George had had the education and training of a Welsh solicitor; he entered politics early, and in the course of a brilliant parliamentary career he had had few later opportunities for reading and thought. But being a man of great natural shrewdness, he was expressing here very accurately the ideas of the more intelligent of the business men and wealthy men and ordinary citizens who supported him.

"There is a new challenge to civilization," he said. "What is it? It is fundamental. It affects the whole fabric of society as we know it; its commerce, its trade, its industry, its finance, its social order—all are involved in it. There are those who maintain that the prosperity and strength of the country have been built up by the stimulating and invigorating appeal to individual impulse, to individual action. That is one view. The State must educate; the

State must assist where necessary ; the State must control where necessary ; the State must shield the weak against the arrogance of the strong ; but the life springs from individual impulse and energy. (Cheers.) That is one view. What is the other ? That private enterprise is a failure, tried, and found wanting—a complete failure, a cruel failure. It must be rooted out, and the community must take charge as a community, to produce, to distribute, as well as to control.

“ Those are great challenges for us to decide. *We* say that the ills of private enterprise can be averted. *They* say, ‘ No, they cannot. No ameliorative, no palliative, no restrictive, no remedial measure will avail. These evils are inherent in the system. They are the fruit of the tree, and you must cut it down.’ That is the challenge we hear ringing through the civilized world to-day, from ocean to ocean, through valley and plain. You hear it in the whining and maniacal shrieking of the Bolsheviks. You hear it in the loud, clear, but more restrained tones of Congresses and Conferences. The Bolsheviks would blow up the fabric with high explosive, with horror. Others would pull it down with the crowbars and with cranks—especially cranks. (Laughter.)

“ Unemployment, with its injustice for the man who seeks and thirsts for employment, who begs for labour and cannot get it, and who is punished for failure he is not responsible for by the starvation of his children—that torture is *something that private enterprise ought to remedy for its own sake*. (Cheers.) Sweating, slums, the sense of semi-slavery in labour, must go. We must cultivate a sense of manhood by treating men as men. If I—and I say this deliberately—if I had to choose between this fabric I believe in, and allowing millions of men and women and children to rot in its cellars, I would not hesitate one hour. That is not the choice. Thank God it is not the choice. Private enterprise can produce more, so that all men get a fair share of it. . . .”¹

Here, put into quasi-eloquent phrasing, and with a jest adapted to the mental habits of the audience, we have the common-sense view of the ordinary prosperous man not only of Great Britain, but of America or France or Italy or

Germany. In quality and tone it is a fair sample of British political thought in 1919. The prevailing economic system has made us what we are, is the underlying idea ; and we do not want any process of social destruction to precede a renaissance of society, we do not want to experiment with the fundamentals of our social order. Let us accept that. Adaptation, Mr. Lloyd George admitted, there had to be. Now this occasion of his speaking was a year and a month after the Armistice, and for all that period private enterprise had been failing to do all that Mr. Lloyd George was so cheerfully promising it would do. The community was in urgent need of houses. Throughout the war there had been a cessation not only of building, but of repairs. The shortage of houses in the last months of 1919 amounted to scores of thousands in Britain alone.² Multitudes of people were living in a state of exasperating congestion, and the most shameless profiteering in apartments and houses was going on. It was a difficult, but not an impossible situation. Given the same enthusiasm and energy and self-sacrifice that had tided over the monstrous crisis of 1916, the far easier task of providing a million houses could have been performed in a year or so. But there had been corners in building materials, transport was in a disordered state, and it did not *pay* private enterprise to build houses at any rents within the means of the people who needed them. Private enterprise, therefore, so far from bothering about the public need of housing, did nothing but corner and speculate in rents and sub-letting. It now demanded grants in aid from the State—in order to build at a profit. And there was a great crowding and dislocation of goods at the depôts because there was insufficient road transport. There was an urgent want of cheap automobiles to move about goods and workers. But private enterprise in the automobile industry found it far more profitable to produce splendid and costly cars for those whom the war had made rich. The munition factories built with public money could have been converted very readily into factories for the mass production of cheap automobiles, but private enterprise had in-

¹ *The Times*, December 8th, 1919.

² Authorities vary between 250,000 and a million houses.



Photo : Imperial War Museum.

IN THE WAR ZONE. THE RUINS OF THE HÔTEL DE VILLE, ARRAS.

sisted upon these factories being sold by the State, and would neither meet the public need itself nor let the State do so. So, too, with the world in the direst discomfort for need of shipping, private enterprise insisted upon the shutting down of the newly constructed State shipyards. Currency was dislocated everywhere, but private enterprise was busy buying and selling francs or marks and intensifying the trouble. While Mr. Lloyd George was making the very characteristic speech we have quoted, the discontent of the common man was gathering everywhere, and little or nothing was being done to satisfy his needs. It was becoming very evident that unless there was to be some profound change in the spirit of business, under an unrestrained private enterprise system there was little or no hope, in Europe at any rate, of decent housing, clothing, or education for the workers for two or three generations.

These are facts that the historian of mankind is obliged to note with as little comment as possible. Private enterprise in Europe in 1919 displayed neither will nor capacity for meeting the crying needs of the time. So soon as it was released from control, it ran naturally into

speculation, cornering, and luxury production. It followed the line of maximum profit. It displayed no sense of its own dangers; and it resisted any attempt to restrain and moderate its profits and make itself serviceable, even in its own interest. And this went on in the face of the most striking manifestations of the extreme recalcitrance on the part of the European masses to the prolonged continuance of the privations and inconveniences they suffered. In 1913 these masses were living as they had lived since birth; they were habituated to the life they led. The masses of 1919, on the other hand, had been uprooted everywhere, to go into the armies, to go into munition factories, and so on. They had lost their habits of acquiescence, and they were hardier and more capable of desperate action. Great multitudes of men had gone through such brutalizing training as, for instance, bayonet drill; they had learnt to be ferocious, and to think less either of killing or being killed. Social unrest had become, therefore, much more dangerous. Everything seemed to point to a refusal to tolerate the current state of affairs for many years. Unless the educated and prosperous

and comfortable people of Europe could speedily get their private enterprise under sufficient restraint to make it work well and rapidly for the common good, unless they could develop the idea of business as primarily a form of public service and not primarily a method of profit-making, unless they could in their own interest achieve a security of peace that would admit of a cessation not only of war preparation, but of international commercial warfare, strike and insurrection promised to follow strike and insurrection up to a complete social and political collapse. It was not that the masses had or imagined that they had the plan of a new social, political, and economic system. They had not, and they did not believe they had. The defects we have pointed out in the socialist scheme (Chapter XXXIX, § 5) were no secret to them. It was a much more dangerous state of affairs than that. It was that they were becoming so disgusted with the current system, with its silly luxury, its universal waste, and its general misery, that they did not care what happened afterwards so long as they could destroy it. It was a return to a state of mind comparable to that which had rendered possible the debacle of the Roman Empire.

Already in 1917 the world had seen one great community go that way, the Russian people. The Russians overturned the old order and submitted to the autocratic rule of a small group of doctrinaire Bolshevik socialists, because these men seemed to have something new to try. They wrecked the old system, and at any cost they would not have it back. The information available from Russia at the time of writing this summary is still too conflicting and too obviously tainted by propagandist aims for us to form any judgment upon the proceedings and methods of the Soviet Government; but it is very plain that from November 1917, Russia has not only endured that government and its mainly socialistic methods, but has fought for it successfully against anything that seemed to threaten a return to the old regime.

We have already (§ 5) pointed out the very broad differences between the Russian and the Western communities, and the strong reasons there are for doubting that they will move

upon parallel lines and act in similar ways. The Russian masses were cut off by want of education and sympathy from the small civilized community of prosperous and educated people which lived upon them. These latter were a little separate nation. The masses below have thrown that separate nation off and destroyed it and begun again, so to speak, upon a new sort of society which, whether it succeed or collapse, cannot fail to be of intense interest to all mankind. But there is much more unity of thought and feeling between class and class in the West than in Russia, and particularly in the Atlantic communities. Even if they wrangle, classes can talk together and understand each other. There is no unbroken stratum of illiterates. The groups of rich and speculative men, the "bad men" in business and affairs, whose freedoms are making the very name of "private enterprise" stink in the nostrils of the ordinary man, are only the more active section of very much larger classes, guilty perhaps of indolence and self-indulgence, but capable of being roused to a sense not merely of the wickedness but of the danger of systematic self-seeking in a strained, impoverished, and sorely tried world. Many of these more reasonable and moral people have shown themselves clearly aware of the nature of the present situation, and some of them have made speeches and delivered sermons and written books—often addressed to the working classes—expressing very generous and unselfish views. Speeches and sermons and books will in themselves do little to allay the gathering wrath of classes ill housed, ill fed and unhealthy, and angry because they believe things are so through the reckless greed of others; but such utterances are valuable as admissions, and if these good intentions, encouraged perhaps and aided by a certain pressure from below, presently develop into a resolute combining and direction of the energies of private enterprise—for a time at least—towards socially necessary work and a restriction of speculation and luxury, and if there begin a rapid provision, even at some cost to the hoards and satisfactions of the successful classes, of the decent homes and gardens, of the pleasant public surroundings, the health services and the education and leisure needed to tranquillize the fiercer discontents, it is still

possible that readjustment rather than revolution will be the method of the Atlantic communities. But that adjustment cannot be indefinitely delayed; it must come soon.

In one way or another it seems inevitable now that the new standard of well-being which the mechanical revolution of the last century has rendered possible, should become the general standard of life. Revolution is conditional upon public discomfort. Social peace is impossible without a rapid amelioration of the needless discomforts of the present time. A rapid resort to willing service and social reconstruction on the part of those who own and rule, or else a world-wide social revolution leading towards an equalization of conditions and an attempt to secure comfort on new and untried lines, seem now to be the only alternatives before mankind. The choice which route shall be taken lies, we believe, in Western Europe, and still more so in America, with the educated, possessing, and influential classes. The former route demands much sacrifice, for prosperous people in particular, a voluntary assumption of public duties and a voluntary acceptance of class discipline and self-denial; the latter may take an indefinite time to traverse, it will certainly be a very destructive and bloody process, and whether it will lead to a new and better state of affairs at last is questionable. A social revolution, if ultimately the Western European States blunder into it, may prove to be a process extending over centuries: it may involve a social breakdown as complete as that of the Roman Empire, and it may necessitate as slow a recuperation.

Let us add to what has been written above a short passage from an abler and far more authoritative pen.¹ It approaches this question of economic disorganization from a different angle, but the drift of its implications is the same. It says as plainly to the private capitalist system: "Mend, show more understanding, and a better and a stronger will for the common welfare, or go."

"In the latter stages of the war all the belligerent governments practised, from necessity or incompetence, what a Bolshevik might have done from design.² Even now, when the war is over, most of them continue out of weakness the same malpractices. But further, the Governments of Europe, being many of them at this moment reckless in their methods as well as weak, seek to direct on to a class known as 'profiteers' the popular indignation against the more obvious consequences of their vicious

methods. These 'profiteers' are, broadly speaking, the *entrepreneur* class of capitalists, that is to say, the active and constructive element in the whole capitalist society, who in a period of rapidly rising prices cannot but get rich quick whether they wish it or desire it or not.³ If prices are continually rising, every trader who has purchased for stock or owns property and plant inevitably makes profits. By directing hatred against this class, there-

¹ J. M. Keynes, *op. cit.*

² They debauched the currency, and wasted money recklessly.

³ Mr. Keynes ignores the fortunes made by deliberately cornering and withholding commodities in a time of shortage.



Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARRIORS: TWO TYPICAL BRITISH "TOMMIES" IN FIGHTING KIT.

fore, the European Governments are carrying a step further the fatal process which the subtle mind of Lenin had consciously conceived. The profiteers are a consequence and not a cause of rising prices. By combining a popular hatred of the class of *entrepreneurs* with the blow already given to social security by the violent and arbitrary disturbance of contract and of the established equilibrium of wealth which is the inevitable result of inflation, these governments are fast rendering impossible a continuance of the social and economic order of the nineteenth century. But they have no plan for replacing it.

"We are thus faced in Europe with the spectacle of an extraordinary weakness on the part of the great capitalist class, which has emerged from the industrial triumphs of the nineteenth century, and seemed a very few years ago our all-powerful master. The terror and personal timidity of the individuals of this class is now so great, their confidence in their place in society and in their necessity to the social organism so diminished, that they are the easy victims of intimidation. This was not so in England twenty-five years ago, any more than it is now in the United States. Then the capitalists believed in themselves, in their value to society, in the propriety of their continued existence in the full enjoyment of their riches and the unlimited exercise of their power. Now they tremble before every insult. Call them pro-Germans, international financiers, or profiteers, and they will give you any ransom you choose to ask not to speak of them so harshly. They allow themselves to be ruined and altogether undone by their own instruments, governments of their own making, and a press of which they are the proprietors. Perhaps it is historically true that no order of society ever perished save by its own hand."

§ II¹

We have dealt with the social and economic disorder of the European communities, and the

rapid return of the "class-war" to the foreground of attention, before giving any account of the work of world settlement that centred on the Peace Conference at Paris, because the worried and pre-occupied state of everyone concerned with private problems of income, prices, employment, and the like goes far to explain the jaded atmosphere in which that Conference addressed itself to the vast task before it.

The story of the Conference turns very largely upon the adventure of one particular man, one of those men whom accident or personal quality picks out as a type to lighten the task of the historian. We have in the course of this history found it very helpful at times to focus our attention upon some individual, Buddha, Alexander the Great, Yuan Chwang, the Emperors Frederick II and Charles V and Napoleon I, for example, and to let him by reflection illuminate the period in which he lived. The conclusion of the Great War can be seen most easily as the rise of the American President, President Wilson, to predominant importance in the world's hopes and attention, and his failure to justify that predominance.

President Wilson (born 1856) had previously been a prominent student and teacher of history, constitutional law, and the political sciences generally. He had held various professorial chairs, and had been President of Princeton University (New Jersey). There is a long list of books to his credit, and they show a mind rather exclusively directed to American history and American politics. There is no evidence that he had at any time in his life made a general study of the world problem outside the very peculiar and exceptional American case. He was mentally the new thing in history, negligent of and rather ignorant of the older things out of which his new world had arisen. He retired from academic life, and was elected Democratic Governor of New Jersey in 1910. In 1913 he became the Democratic presidential

¹ Among the books consulted here, for this and the two following sections, were Dr. Dillon's *Peace Conference*; H. Wilson Harris's *The Peace in the Making* and *President Wilson, his Problems and his Policy*; J. M. Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace*; Weyl's *The End of the War*; Stallybrass's *Society of*

States; Brailsford's *A League of Nations*; F. C. Howe's *Why War?*; L. S. Woolf's *International Government*; J. A. Hobson's *Towards International Government*; Lowes Dickinson's *The Choice before Us*; Sir Walter Phillimore's *Three Centuries of Treaties*, and C. E. Fayle's *Great Settlement*.

candidate, and as a consequence of a violent quarrel between ex-President Roosevelt and President Taft, which split the dominant Republican party, he became President of the United States.

The events of August, 1914, seem to have taken President Wilson, like the rest of his fellow-countrymen, by surprise. We find him cabling an offer of his services as a mediator on August 3rd. Then, for a time, he and America watched the conflict. At first neither the American people nor their President seem to have had a very clear or profound understanding of that long-gathered catastrophe. Their tradition for a century had been to disregard the problems of the Old World, and it was not to be lightly changed. The imperialistic arrogance of the German Court and the stupid inclination of the German military authorities towards melodramatic "frightfulness," their invasion of Belgium, their cruelties there, their use of poison gas, and the nuisance of their submarine campaign, created a deepening hostility to Germany in the States as the war proceeded; but the tradition of political abstinence and the deep-rooted persuasion that America possessed a political morality altogether superior to European conflicts, restrained the President from active intervention. He adopted a lofty tone. He professed to be unable to judge the causes and justice of the great war. It was largely his high pacific attitude that secured his re-election as President for a second term. But the world is not to be mended by merely regarding evil-doers with an expression of rather indiscriminating disapproval. By the end of 1916 the Germans had been encouraged to believe that under no circumstances whatever would the United States fight, and in 1917 they began their unrestricted submarine warfare and the sinking of American ships without notice. President Wilson and the American people were dragged into the war by this supreme folly. And also they were dragged into a reluctant attempt to define their relations to Old-World politics in some other terms than those of mere aloofness. Their thoughts and temper changed very rapidly. They came into the war side by side with the Allies, but not in any pact with the Allies. They came into the war, in the name of their own modern civilization, to punish and end

an intolerable political and military situation.

Slow and belated judgments are sometimes the best judgments. In a series of "Notes," too long and various for detailed treatment in this Outline, thinking aloud, as it were, in the hearing of all mankind, President Wilson sought to state the essential differences of the American State from the Great Powers of the Old World. We have been at some pains in this history to make plain the development of these differences. He unfolded a conception of international relationships that came like a gospel, like the hope of a better world, to the whole Eastern hemisphere. Secret agreements were to cease, "nations" were to determine their own destinies, militarist aggression was to cease, the sea-ways were to be free to all mankind. These commonplaces of American thought, these secret desires of every sane man, came like a great light upon the darkness of anger and conflict in Europe. At last, men felt, the ranks of diplomacy were broken, the veils of Great Power "policy" were rent in twain. Here with authority, with the strength of a powerful new nation behind it, was the desire of the common man throughout the world, plainly said.

Manifestly there was needed some overriding instrument of government to establish world law and maintain these broad and liberal generalizations upon human intercourse. A number of schemes had floated in men's minds for the attainment of that end. In particular there was a movement for some sort of world league, a "League of Nations." The American President adopted this phrase and sought to realize it. An essential condition of the peace he sought through the overthrow of German imperialism was, he declared, to be this federal organ. This League of Nations was to be the final court of appeal in international affairs. It was to be the substantial realization of the peace. Here again he awakened a tremendous echo.

President Wilson was the spokesman of a new age. Throughout the war, and for some little time after it had ended, he held, so far as the Old World was concerned, that exalted position. But in America, where they knew him better, there were doubts. And writing as we do now with the wisdom of subsequent

events, we can understand these doubts. America, throughout a century and more of detachment and security, had developed new ideals and formulæ of political thought, without realizing with any intensity that, under conditions of stress and danger, these ideals and formulæ might have to be passionately sustained. To her community many things were platitudes that had to the Old-World communities, entangled still in ancient political complications, the quality of a saving gospel. President Wilson was responding to the thought and conditions of his own people and his own country, based on a liberal tradition that had first found its full expression in English speech; but to Europe and Asia he seemed to be thinking and saying, for the first time in history, things hitherto undeveloped and altogether secret. And that misconception he may have shared.

We are dealing here with an able and successful professor of political science, who did not fully realize what he owed to his contemporaries and the literary and political atmosphere he had breathed throughout his life; and who passed very rapidly after his re-election as President, from the mental attitudes of a political leader to those of a Messiah. His "Notes" are a series of explorations of the elements of the world situation. When at last, in his Address to Congress of January 8th, 1918, he produced his Fourteen Points as a definite statement of the American peace intentions, they were, as a statement, far better in their spirit than in their arrangement and matter.

Yet, since the Fourteen Points certainly mark a new epoch in human affairs, and since it was in the belief that they would determine and limit the pains and penalties of the peace treaty that Germany capitulated,¹ it may be well to summarize them here, with a word or so of explanation.

¹ "The Allied Governments," the effective passage ran, "have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow, they declare their readiness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's Address to Congress of January 8th, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent Addresses."

(Note transmitted to the German Government by the Allies through the Swiss Minister on November 5th, 1918.)

(I) The First Point was the most vital of all. It summarizes and dismisses the essential evils of the Great Power system. It demands: "Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view."

(II) "Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants."

(III) "The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance."

(IV) "Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety."

There are four points of universal importance, admirably stated. But II is insufficient. Why should the sea-ways alone be free? What of the air-ways above three thousand feet? What of the great international land routes? Why, if Switzerland is at war with Germany and Italy, should those Powers be able to stop air and land transit and the passage of peaceful people between France and Constantinople?

After IV, the Fourteen Points embark upon the consideration of particular cases, for which one general statement should have provided.

(V) provides for "A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty, the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined." . . . This is hopelessly vague. What, for instance, is this about claims and title? There is no definition, no standard here.

The drop towards particular current issues continues in the next eight points, which betray clearly how limited and accidental was the President's vision of European affairs.

(VI) is a vague demand for the evacuation of Russian territory (then occupied by Ger-

many), and the "assistance" (undefined) of the Russian people.

(VII) Evacuation and restoration of Belgium.

(VIII) Evacuation and restoration of all French territory, and the "righting" of the wrong done to France by Prussia in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine.

(IX) The readjustment of the Italian frontier "on the lines of nationality."

(X) "Autonomy" of the Austrian "subject nations."

(XI) The Balkans to be evacuated, Serbia to be granted an outlet to the sea, and the independence of the Balkan States to be guaranteed.

(XII) Turkish subject nations to be assured of "undoubted security of life and unmolested opportunity of autonomous development." The Dardanelles to be internationalized, and Ottoman sovereignty to be recognized only in Turkish districts.

(XIII) Poland to be independent.

Finally the Fourteenth Point arises again to the Great Charter level out of this peddling with special cases.

(XIV) "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political and territorial independence for great and small States alike."

So far the Fourteen Points. But some of the things that President Wilson said after this epoch-making address went much further and much higher than this first statement. On September 27th, 1918, at New York, he said some very important things:

"As I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, in a sense the most essential part, of the peace settlement itself. It cannot be formed now. If formed now, it would be merely a new alliance confined to the nations associated against a common enemy. . . .

"But these general terms do not disclose the whole matter. Some details are needed to make them sound less like a thesis and more like a practical programme. These, then, are some of the particulars, and I state them with the greater confidence because I can state them authoritatively as representing this Government's interpretation of its own duty with regard to peace.

"First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that has no favourites and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

"Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

"Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations.

"Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special selfish economic combinations within the League, and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion, except as the power of economic penalty, by exclusion from the markets of the world, may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

"Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world. . . .

"In the same sentence in which I say that the United States will enter into no special arrangements or understandings with particular nations, let me say also that the United States is prepared to assume its full share of responsibility for the maintenance of the common covenants and understandings upon which peace must henceforth rest.

We still read Washington's immortal warning against "entangling alliances" with full comprehension and an answering purpose. But only special and limited alliances entangle; and we recognize and accept the duty of a new day in which we are permitted to hope for a general alliance, which will avoid entanglements and clear the air of the world for common understandings and the maintenance of common rights."

These Fourteen Points and their significant later addenda had an immense reception throughout the world. Here at last seemed a peace for reasonable men everywhere, as good and acceptable to honest and decent Germans, and Russians, as to honest and decent French.

men and Englishmen and Belgians; and for some months the whole world was lit by faith in Wilson. Could they have been made the basis of a world settlement in 1919, they would forthwith have opened a new and more hopeful era in human affairs.

But, as we must tell, they did not do that. There was about President Wilson a certain narrowness of mind, a certain suspicion of egotism; there was in the generation of people in the United States to whom this great occasion came, a generation born in security, reared in plenty and, so far as history goes, in ignorance, a generation remote from the tragic issues that had made Europe grave, a certain superficiality and lightness of mind. It was not that the American people were superficial by nature and necessity, but that they had never been deeply stirred by the idea of a human community larger than their own. It was an intellectual, but not a moral conviction, with them. One had on the one hand these new people of the New World, with their new ideas, their finer and better ideas, of peace and world righteousness, and on the other the old, bitter, deeply entangled peoples of the Great Power system; and the former were crude and rather childish in their immense inexperience, and the latter were seasoned and bitter and intricate. The theme of this clash of the raw idealist youthfulness of a new age with the experienced ripeness of the old, was treated years ago by that great novelist, Henry James, in a very typical story called *Daisy Miller*. It is the pathetic story of a frank, trustful, high-minded, but rather simple-minded American girl, with a real disposition towards righteousness and a great desire for a "good time," and how she came to Europe and was swiftly entangled and put in the wrong, and at last driven to

welcome death by the complex tortuousness and obstinate limitations of the older world. There have been a thousand variants of that theme in real life, a thousand such trans-Atlantic tragedies, and the story of President

Wilson is one of them.

But it is not to be supposed, because the new thing succumbs to the old infections, that is the final condemnation of the new thing.

Probably no fallible human being manifestly trying to do his best amidst overwhelming circumstances has been subjected to such minute, searching, and pitiless criticism as President Wilson. He is blamed, and it would seem that he is rightly blamed, for conducting the war and the ensuing peace negotiations on strictly party lines. He re-

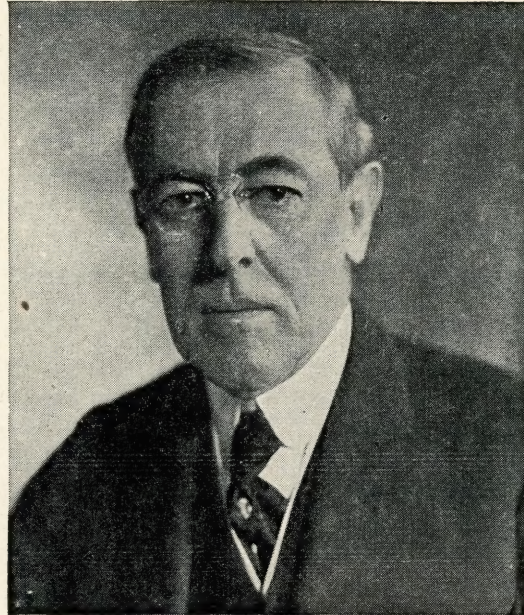


Photo: Topical Press.

PRESIDENT WILSON.

mained the President representing the American Democratic Party, when circumstances conspired to make him the representative of the general interests of mankind. He made no attempt to forget party issues for a time, and to incorporate with himself such great American leaders as ex-President Roosevelt, ex-President Taft, and the like. He did not draw fully upon the moral and intellectual resources of the States; he made the whole issue too personal, and he surrounded himself with merely personal adherents. And a still graver error was his decision to come to the Peace Conference himself. Nearly every experienced critic seems to be of opinion that he should have remained in America, in the rôle of America, speaking occasionally as if a nation spoke. Throughout the concluding years of the war he had achieved an unexampled position in the world.

Says Doctor Dillon:¹ "Europe, when the President touched its shores, was as clay ready for the creative potter. Never before were the

¹ In his book, *The Peace Conference*.

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